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hat dieser Entente . . . wohl Geburtshilfe geleistet". Bismarck's policy toward France is treated as purely and consistently one of an alert defensive; and the wrong side of his frequently contradictory remarks concerning "preventive wars" is simply ignored. The War Scare of 1875 reappears as a groundless conspiracy against the Chancellor—an appearance kept up by pulling several events out of their temporal context. Through similar treatment the crisis of January and February, 1887, is dispersed into thin air. The latter years are treated in general too slightly in proportion to the scope of the book and the amount of material available; while the guiding thread of Bismarck's own policy is often lost in the discussion of other factors in the situation.

Many of the book's defects are common to all works on the subject completed before the important revelations of the last two years. There are a few omissions of earlier sources of information, which need not be enumerated, as the present importance of the chief of them has been greatly reduced by Pribram's authoritative work on the secret treaties of Austria-Hungary. The Russian side of things is remarkably well brought out, considering the fact that no sources in the Russian language have been employed. Despite its inconclusiveness, Plehn's book commands attention as a well-ordered synthesis of scattering materials on the largest scale yet attempted. The employment of recent disclosures in support of orthodox interpretations is not the least interesting feature of the work. Many such special studies, approached from many angles and incorporating the new material as it appears, will be necessary before a mature and balanced statement of the case can be evolved.

J. V. FULLER.

Lebenserinnerungen und Politische Denkwürdigkeiten. Von Botschaftsrat a. D. HERMANN Freiherrn v. ECKARDSTEIN. In two volumes. (Leipzig: Paul List. 1919. Pp. 324; 440. M. 34.)

IN Germany during and since the World War there has been much searching of hearts as well as searching of records to determine the causes of her unpopularity among the nations and the reasons why so many of them ended by combining against her. There has naturally been wide divergence of opinion. The first impulse has been the usual one, to condemn the statesmen and diplomats who have been responsible for the foreign policy their country has pursued. But here a line must be drawn; it is still not the fashion to question the wisdom and skill of Bismarck. The errors of the ways of Germany are taken as beginning with about the year 1890, even if it is admitted that Bismarck's policy of balancing between Russia and England was too complicated to be kept up indefinitely by anyone but a genius like himself. But whose fault was it that Russia and France came together, and at a later date France and England, and then, most astonishing of all, England and

Russia, whereas Germany at the hour of trial was deserted by her allies, Italy and Rumania? Some of these things were perhaps inevitable but surely not all.

When we come to the question of just what blunders were committed, we find in the main two schools of opinion. There are those who believe with Reventlow and Tirpitz that the worst mistakes the statesmen of the German Empire made were their failure in 1890 to renew the Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, and their inability to perceive that the real rival of the future was England. The only sound policy was the one which Prussia had followed throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century, that of intimate relations with her eastern neighbor, with whom she had much in common and no really conflicting interests. All that was needed was conciliation as well as firmness and a friendly attitude towards Russia in questions that did not affect Germany. Friendship with England, on the other hand, besides estranging Russia, was a delusion and a snare in itself, owing to the jealousy of German progress felt by the British and to their determination to brook no equal on the sea.

Another school of German writers take what we might call the Lichnowsky point of view, which is exactly the opposite of the above. They maintain that Russia was the inevitable foe and menace to Germany but that Great Britain was the obvious and proper friend. They say that there was no fundamental cause for difficulties between the two and that most of those which actually occurred were the fault of German policy. Baron von Eckardstein is a champion of this school, in truth his work has furnished a whole arsenal of weapons for those who support it. Whether one agrees with his thesis or not, the information he offers is both interesting and important.

Eckardstein's first volume is devoted to his early experiences in the army and in the diplomatic service. These are entertaining though not extraordinary, and some of the anecdotes have value. The notable part of his book begins with his transfer to the German embassy in London. During a twelve years' stay in England he was in a position to see and hear a great deal of what went on behind the scenes, especially when, owing to the prolonged ill health of his chief, Count Hatzfeldt, he was practically in charge of the embassy, even if one sometimes suspects this was a little less often than he would like us to think. He was also in close correspondence with Holstein, with whom he fell out only toward the end of his own career. In addition, he seems to have been at home in the highest English political and fashionable society, indeed he married an English woman. He was thus in a position to be well informed and we now get the results of his information, including several original documents. They must be painful reading for any German, if for no other reason from the circumstance that while Eckardstein continually defends and praises the British statesmen with whom he had to deal, he has few good words for the foreign policy of his own

country and for the men who conducted it. In particular the emperor and Holstein come in for savage and repeated criticism. Eckardstein's whole tone is that of a public servant disappointed and embittered by failure, who believes that his country has been ruined by the blind folly of those who shaped its destinies.

But however much we may question the fairness of his views and justly accuse him of not taking into account all the difficulties of the situation, there is no denying that the facts he gives us are important, not to say startling, though some of them need controlling from other sources.¹ His main thesis is that whereas Bismarck several times, notably in 1878 and in 1887, made direct overtures to England for an alliance and was unable to bring one about, it was England at a later date that was anxious for the alliance and according to Eckardstein, in 1895, 1898, 1899, and repeatedly in 1901, suggested a treaty of the sort, and it was Germany that then refused to give ear. Much of what he has to tell in this connection is totally new or has only been recently suspected even by students. One of the most amazing tales is the proposal of Lord Salisbury in 1895 that the Ottoman Empire should be divided between England, Germany, and Austria. The history of the later English offers is also full of interest. Had they been accepted it might have changed the fate of Germany and of the world. We note among other things the eagerness of the British government as late as the autumn of 1901 to sign an agreement to check the designs of France on Morocco. But the Wilhelmstrasse believed that what the English wanted was for Germany to pull their chestnuts out of the fire for them, in Africa as regarded the French, and in Asia as regarded the Russians. It did not believe that an entente between England and either France or Russia was within the bounds of practical possibility. Holstein was emphatic on this point. We can now understand better than ever before the wrath and discomfiture of the German Foreign Office when in 1904 France and England did come together and England handed over to France this self-same Morocco which a couple of years earlier she had been so anxious to keep her out of. The German reply was the visit of the emperor to Tangier and the Morocco crisis, but by this time Eckardstein had resigned in disgust his position in London and had returned to his own country. His book, which has already given rise to lively controversy, will long be referred to as an authority on the momentous events of which it treats.

ARCHIBALD CARY COOLIDGE.

Fünfzig Jahre Reichsdienst: Lebenserinnerungen. Von OTTMAR VON MOHL, Preussischem Kammerherrn und Wirklichem Geheimen Rat. (Leipzig: Paul List. 1920. Pp. 318. M. 30, bound.)

GERMAN bureaucracy could hardly produce a better exponent than

¹ In certain cases this has already happened. Cf. review of Hammann's first two volumes in the *American Historical Review* for July, 1920 (XXV. 718-719).